Policy 4112: Off-Highway Vehicle Use

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Category: Academic Affairs
Subcategory: Research
Covered Individuals: Employees, Students, and Volunteers
Responsible Executive: Vice President for Research
Policy Custodian: Executive Director of Environmental Health & Safety

BACKGROUND:

Rationale for Policy Revision

Policy 4112 has been revised to reflect updated legal requirements, clarify responsibilities, and promote consistent and safe use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) across university activities. The revisions incorporate changes in Utah law (Utah Code § 41-22-31), effective January 1, 2023, which require all OHV operators to obtain state-mandated certification through an online education course and to carry proof of certification while operating an OHV on public land. The revised Policy 4112 requires both state certification and OHV operational training to support safe and responsible operation.

In addition to addressing these updated training and certification requirements, the revision clarifies personal protective equipment (PPE) expectations that were not sufficiently defined in the previous policy. The previous version did not clearly address how PPE requirements vary based on operating environment, task, and type of OHV, or establish a process for requesting and evaluating PPE exemptions. The revised policy addresses these gaps by differentiating OHV classifications, adopting definitions that align with the Utah Code § 41-22-31, defining environment-specific PPE requirements, and establishing a consistent process for evaluating exemption requests.

The policy has also been reorganized to improve clarity, usability, and consistency with current USU policy formatting and style guidelines. The revised structure simplifies related requirements and responsibilities, making the policy easier for the USU community to understand and apply across a variety of OHV operations.

Alignment with USU's Mission

Updates to Policy 4112 support Utah State University's mission as a student-centered land-grant institution by promoting safe, responsible, and effective operations in support of teaching, research, and outreach activities. By clarifying requirements for OHV use and personal protective equipment (PPE), the policy helps ensure that work is conducted in a manner that protects individuals, supports learning and discovery, and reflects the university's commitment to responsible stewardship of people and resources.

Impact on the USU Community

The revised policy provides clearer expectations and consistent guidance for employees, students, and volunteers who operate OHVs as part of university activities. These changes are intended to reduce the risk of injury, support compliance with applicable safety standards, and promote a shared understanding of safe work practices across diverse programs and operating environments. The revised policy provides a consistent

framework for OHV use in fieldwork, research, facilities, and educational activities while supporting safe operation and compliance.

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE NEW/REVISED POLICY:

Key provisions

The revised policy establishes updated training requirements, defined personal protective equipment (PPE) standards, clear responsibilities, and a formal process for PPE exemptions. Other substantive changes provide additional clarification rather than introducing new requirements, including more precise guidance regarding PPE needs based on operating environment and type of OHV. This includes specifying PPE expectations for backcountry use of Type II and Type III OHVs, including Utility Task Vehicles (UTVs) and other side-by-side OHVs.

Stakeholder Input and Incorporation of Feedback

Stakeholder input was gathered over approximately eighteen months through a structured, multi-phase engagement process to ensure the revised policy is practical, feasible, and aligned with real university operations. Leadership from units that regularly use OHVs was engaged early in the process to provide input on the policy direction. A cross-functional focus group was subsequently given the opportunity to review the draft and submit feedback, resulting in revisions that clarified requirements and addressed operational considerations.

Following these revisions, the policy was distributed to selected department heads and directors overseeing OHV-using units for leadership-level review and feedback prior to implementation. Feedback from all groups was carefully evaluated for feasibility and alignment with safety and compliance objectives and incorporated into the final draft. This process helped ensure that the revised policy reflects input from stakeholders representing a range of university operations.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

The revised policy will be published online and made available for a defined period to solicit additional feedback from the university community and the broader public. To support implementation, procedures will be developed and made accessible alongside the policy to promote consistent application and ease of compliance. The procedures will provide clear instruction for meeting training requirements, documenting PPE exemptions, and complying with Utah law (Utah Code § 41-22-31).

Communication of the revised policy will occur through multiple channels, including direct notifications to affected departments, campus-wide announcements, and integration into relevant training programs to ensure that operational users and leadership are informed of applicable requirements and expectations.

Implementation and ongoing maintenance will require resources for online hosting of the policy and procedures, staff time for reviewing exemption requests and training records, and minor administrative support to monitor compliance. No significant additional financial resources are anticipated beyond routine operational support.

University Policy 4112: Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Usage

Category: Academic Affairs
Subcategory: Research
Covered Individuals: Employees, Students, and Volunteers
Responsible Executive: Vice President for Research
Policy Custodian: Office of Research, Executive Director of Environmental Health and Safety
Last Revised: 2026/MM/DD
Previous USU Policy Number: 539 & 4110

4112.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This Policy establishes requirements and expectations for the safe and continued use of motorized vehicles classified by Utah State University ("USU") as Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) for all USU business, sponsored activities, and research. It applies to all USU faculty, staff, students, and volunteers operating an OHV.

4112.2 POLICY

2.1 Authorized Use of OHVs

Only Authorized Users may operate an OHV for USU business, sponsored activities, or research. Authorized Users must possess a driver's license valid in the state of Utah, complete required training as outlined in Section 2.2, and carry both their license and Utah OHV certification while operating the vehicle. All OHVs must be operated solely for official USU purposes, and motorcycle use is strongly discouraged. OHVs must be registered according to Utah law, except for experimental vehicles, with individual units responsible for registration costs.

2.2 Requirements for Authorized Use

To become an Authorized User, faculty, staff, volunteers, or students must obtain Utah OHV certification and complete an initial operational safety training course specific to the type of equipment for which authorization is sought. In addition, each project or unit using OHVs must provide training tailored to the location, environmental conditions, and the intended use of the equipment. Authorized Users are required to participate in refresher and/or remedial training as needed to maintain safe operating practices.

Supervisors of Authorized Users who operate Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) must maintain accurate records of Authorized Users and the training they have completed. Authorized Users are individually accountable for knowing and complying with all applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and University policies.

2.3 Safety and Operation Requirements

2.3.1 Vehicle Standards

In accordance with Utah Code Section 41-22-10.7, all OHVs operated by Authorized Users must be equipped with:

(1) brakes adequate to stop and hold the vehicle;
(2) headlights and taillights when operated between sunset and sunrise;
(3) noise control devices (mufflers) and spark arrestors (except for snowmobiles); and
(4) safety flags when operated on designated sand dunes.

2.3.2 Reporting Accidents

Accidents involving an OHV must be reported as soon as reasonably possible to the Supervisor of the department for which the equipment is registered. Supervisors must follow all university protocols for accident reporting.

2.3.3 Roll-Over Protective Structure Requirements

Beginning July 1, 2021, all purchased, leased, or rented All-Terrain Type II or III Vehicles must be equipped with a properly installed Roll-Over Protective Structure (ROPS) and seatbelts for all occupants based on Utah Code Section 41-22-10.8. Operators and passengers of Type II and Type III OHVs are required to use available seatbelts at all times.

2.3.4 Vehicle Modifications

OHVs may not be modified in any manner that affects the recommended mode of operation, speed, or safety of the vehicle. All operators and passengers must occupy manufacturer-approved seats and adhere to the designated seating and weight capacity. Passengers are not permitted on the sides of the OHV, except when transporting an injured person secured on a backboard.

2.3.5 Personal Protective Equipment

Authorized Users of OHVs classified as All-Terrain Type I Vehicles must wear a DOT-, ANSI-, or SNELL-approved helmet, eye protection, and gloves at all times while operating the vehicle. It is recommended that users also wear over-the-ankle boots, sturdy pants, and long sleeves.

Authorized Users of OHVs classified as All-Terrain Type II and Type III vehicles are required to wear a DOT-, ANSI-, or SNELL-approved helmet, eye protection and gloves when operating in a Backcountry Environment. Use of over-the-ankle boots, sturdy pants, and long sleeves is also recommended in these conditions.

Exemptions from Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements outlined in this Policy may be requested on a case-by-case basis by the Supervisor overseeing the specific OHV activity. Each request must be submitted for review to EH&S and Risk Management and approved by the Supervisor's Department Head or Director. Exemption durations may not exceed 12 months and must be renewed as needed.

The University does not permit exemptions to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for individuals under the age of 18 operating All-Terrain Type I Vehicles, Snowmobiles, or Motorcycles pursuant to Utah Code Title 41, Chapter 22 – Off-highway Vehicles (multiple sections referenced)

2.3.6 Guidelines for Loading and Unloading Activities

For all loading and unloading activities, the following guidelines will be used:

- Loading ramps must be secured on both sides, either by attachment to the trailer or by using safety straps or chains.
- Loading ramps must be rated for at least 150% of the dry weight of the vehicle.
- Avoid placing loading ramps at steep angles (no greater than 30°).

4112.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Authorized Users

Authorized Users are faculty, staff, students, or volunteers who have completed all required training and meet the eligibility criteria below to operate an Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) on behalf of USU. Each Authorized User must:

- hold a valid driver's license legally recognized in the state of Utah and carry it while operating an OHV;
- review this Policy and any exemptions applicable to the Authorized User; and
- complete the following required trainings:
  - the Utah OHV certification course required by Utah Code 41-22-31(1)(B);
  - an operational safety training or course, specific to the vehicle type;
  - any location- or use-specific training assigned by their Supervisor;
  - refresher or remedial training as needed or assigned.

While operating an OHV, Authorized Users must:

- wear seatbelts while riding in or operating an All-Terrain Type II or III vehicle made or procured after July 1, 2021;
- wear all required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including a DOT-, ANSI- or SNELL-approved helmet, eye protection, and full-fingered gloves at all times while operating All-Terrain Type I vehicles, or operating Type II or III vehicles in a Backcountry Environment (unless a documented exemption is approved);
- operate the OHV safely and in compliance with all applicable laws and policies;
- promptly report any accidents, safety concerns, or maintenance issues to their Supervisor; and
- avoid unsafe modifications or unauthorized changes to the OHVs operation or configuration.

3.1.1 Use of Substances or Devices

Authorized Users are prohibited from operating an OHV while under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, or prescription medications that may impair their ability to operate a vehicle. Additionally, the use of mobile phones for any purpose while operating an OHV is strictly prohibited.

3.2 Supervisors

Supervisors of Authorized Users who operate Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) must ensure the following:

- Each Authorized User has completed all required training outlined in this Policy, holds a driver's license valid in the state of Utah, possesses any applicable state-required certifications, and has reviewed a copy of this Policy along with any approved exemptions.
- OHVs are maintained according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Users are provided with access to a DOT, ANSI, or SNELL- approved helmet, appropriate eye protection, and gloves.
- Requests for Policy exemptions are submitted appropriately and undergo formal review by both EH&S and Risk Management. No exemption is implemented without this review and final approval from the appropriate Department Head or Director.
- Maintain accurate records of Authorized Users, OHV training completion, and active PPE exemptions.
- Noncompliance is addressed through remedial training, revocation of OHV privileges, or further disciplinary action.

3.3 Environmental Health & Safety

Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) supports the safe operation of Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) and ensures compliance with applicable University, local, state, and federal laws and regulations. EH&S will:

- review and provide feedback on exemption requests related to PPE requirements, ensuring alignment with this Policy, regulatory standards, and best practices;
- offer guidance to help departments implement compliant and effective OHV safety practices;
- advise on equipment standards, hazard mitigation, training needs, and incident prevention strategies; and
- assist in assessing whether OHVs meet safety and ROPS requirements.

3.4 Risk Management

Risk management supports safe and compliant Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use by advising on risk-related matters and minimizing institutional liability. Risk Management will:

- jointly review exemption requests related to PPE and safety requirements in coordination with EH&S to ensure exemptions do not increase institutional risk; and
- advise on insurance coverage, claims processes, and risk mitigation strategies for University-owned or operated OHVs.

4112.4 REFERENCES

- Utah Code Title 41, Chapter 22 – Off-highway Vehicles (multiple sections referenced)

4112.5 RELATED USU POLICIES

- Policy 3014: Safety and Health
- Policy 5312: Vehicle Use Policy
- Policy 5315: Use of University Property

4112.6 DEFINITIONS

- **All-Terrain Type I Vehicle.** Any motor vehicle 52 inches or less in width, having a shipping weight of 1,500 pounds or less, traveling on three or more Low-Pressure Tires, having a seat designed to be straddled by the operator, and designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain.

- **All-Terrain Type II Vehicle. [a]** Any motor vehicle 80 inches or less in width, traveling on four or more Low-Pressure Tires, having a steering wheel, non-straddle seating, rollover protection system, and designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain and is: **(i)** an electric-powered vehicle; or **(ii)** a vehicle powered by an internal combustion engine and has a shipping weight of 3,500 pounds or less. **[b]** All-Terrain Type II vehicles do not include golf carts, any vehicle designed to carry a person with a disability, any vehicle not specifically designed or modified primarily for recreational use on unimproved terrain, or farm tractors, as identified under Utah Code Section 41-1a-102.

- **All-Terrain Type III Vehicle.** Any other motor vehicle not defined as All-Terrain Type I or II that is designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain. All-Terrain Type III vehicles do not include golf carts, any vehicle designed to carry a person with a disability, any vehicle not specifically designed or modified primarily for recreational use on unimproved terrain, or farm tractors, as defined under Utah Code Section 41-1a-102.

- **Authorized User.** Any USU faculty, staff, student, or volunteer who has completed all required training and meets the eligibility criteria to operate an OHV on behalf of the University.

- **Backcountry Environment.** Means a remote, undeveloped, or minimally developed area where emergency services may be delayed or unavailable, terrain is often rugged or unpaved, and communication or navigation infrastructure is limited. This includes trails, open land, forest service roads, rangelands, and other off-highway areas not regularly maintained for standard vehicle use, outside of reliable cell phone service.

- **Low-Pressure Tires**. Any pneumatic tire six inches or more in width designed for use on wheels with a rim diameter of fourteen inches or less and utilizing an operating pressure of 10 pounds per square inch or less as recommended by the vehicle manufacturer.

- **Motorcycle.** Any motor vehicle having a straddle-type seat and is designed to travel on not more than two tires.

- **Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV).** A motor-driven off-road vehicle (excluding watercraft) capable of travel without the benefit of a road or trail, on or over land, snow, ice, or other natural terrain, including but not limited to Snowmobiles, Motorcycles, and All-Terrain Type I, II, and III vehicles.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).** Protective clothing, helmets, goggles, gloves, boots, or other garments or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection. The hazards addressed by protective equipment include physical, electrical, heat, chemicals, biohazards, and airborne particulate matter.

- **Roll-Over Protective Structure (ROPS).** Refers to a vehicle or piece of equipment that is fitted with a safety feature designed to protect the operator in the event of a rollover. A ROPS typically consists of a reinforced steel frame or bar system that creates a protective zone around the operator.

  Commonly found on tractors, construction equipment, and certain utility vehicles (such as UTVs or ATVs used in work settings). ROPS must be used in conjunction with a seatbelt to be effective. Without a seatbelt, the operator can be thrown from the protective zone during a rollover, reducing the ROPS's ability to prevent injury.

- **Snowmobile**. A motorized OHV designed for travel on snow or ice, typically steered by skis at the front and driven by a continuous track at the rear. Snowmobiles are intended for off-road use and not for highway travel.

- **Supervisor.** The person who gives instructions or orders to subordinate employees and/or volunteers and is held responsible for the work and actions of other employees and/or volunteers. A Supervisor is considered someone who approves a timecard or leave requests for an employee and/or volunteer. In research settings, a Principal Investigator (PI) may also be considered a Supervisor.

Information below is not included as part of the contents of the official Policy. It is provided only as a convenience for readers/users and may be changed at any time by persons authorized by the President, subject to review by the USU Policy Committee.

RESOURCES

Related Forms and Tools

- OHV PPE Exemption Request Form

Contacts

- Environmental Health and Safety: Office of Research Environmental Health and Safety | USU
- Risk Management: Risk Management | USU

POLICY HISTORY

Original issue date: 2021/02/10

Last review date: 2026/MM/DD

Next scheduled review date: 2029/10/01

Previous revision dates: 2021/02/10; 2025/10/29; 2026/01/16

University Policy 4112: Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Usage

Category: Academic Affairs
Subc ~~C~~ategory: Research
Covered Individuals: ~~University~~ Employees, Students, and Volunteers
Responsible Executive: Vice President for Research
Policy Custodian: Office of Research, Executive Director of Environmental Health & Safety
Last Revised: ~~2026/01/16~~2026/MM/DD
Previous USU Policy Number: 539 & 4110

4112.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This ~~p~~Policy ~~is to~~ establishes requirements and expectations for the safe and continued use of motorized vehicles ~~defined~~ classified by Utah State University ("USU") as Off-Highway Vehicle (OHVs) for all USU business, sponsored activities, ~~or~~ and research. ~~This policy~~ It applies to all USU faculty, staff, students, and ~~visitors~~volunteers ~~who are authorized to use an~~ operating an OHV. ~~or snowmobile. This policy has particular relevance to USU farms, horticultural units, and research conducted outside of USU owned or operated property.~~

4112.2 POLICY

2.1 ~~General~~ Authorized Use of OHVs ~~or Snowmobiles~~

Only Authorized Users may operate an OHV ~~or snowmobile~~ for USU business, ~~-~~sponsored activities, or research.

~~2.1.1 OHVs or Snowmobiles owned by USU may only be operated for official USU business. Motorcycle use is strongly discouraged for USU business.~~

Authorized Users ~~of OHVs or snowmobiles~~ must ~~have~~possess a driver's license ~~that is~~ valid in the state of Utah, complete required training as outlined in Section 2.2, and carry both their license and Utah OHV certification while operating the vehicle. ~~The user must have their driver's license with them when operating the vehicle.~~ All OHVs must be operated solely for official USU purposes, and motorcycle use is strongly discouraged. OHVs must be registered according to Utah law, except for experimental vehicles, with individual units responsible for registration costs.

~~2.1.2 Drugs and Alcohol: Authorized users shall not operate an OHV or snowmobile while under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, prescription drugs with potential to impair your ability to operate a motor vehicle, or illegal drugs.~~

~~2.1.3 Registration: OHVs or snowmobiles owned or operated by USU must be registered with USU Property Management in accordance with Utah Laws. Experimental vehicles are exempt from registration.~~

~~2.1.4 Mobile Phone: No authorized user shall operate an OHV or snowmobile while using a mobile phone for talking or texting.~~

~~2.1.5 Purchasing: Beginning July 1, 2021 all purchased, leased or rented All Terrain Type II or Type III vehicles must be equipped with a manufacturer's installed ROPS system including seat belts.~~

~~2.2 Training~~ Requirements for Authorized Use

~~Initial Training:~~ To become an ~~a~~Authorized ~~u~~User, faculty, staff, volunteers, or students must ~~complete one of the following training courses:~~obtain Utah OHV certification and complete an initial operational safety training course specific to the type of equipment for which authorization is sought. In addition, each project or unit using OHVs must provide training tailored to the location, environmental conditions, and the intended use of the equipment. Authorized Users are required to participate in refresher and/or remedial training as needed to maintain safe operating practices.

- ~~Utah OHV Safety Course offered online from Utah State Parks: https://www.offroad- ed.com/utah/~~
- ~~Utah Snowmobile Safety Course offered online from Utah State Parks: https://www.snowmobilecourse.com/usa/utah/~~
- ~~Utah State University OHV Training course offered online from the Environmental Health and Safety Office.~~
- ~~Specialized Training: Each project using OHVs or snowmobiles must conduct training specific for the location, conditions and type of use.~~
-
- ~~Recurrent Training: Each authorized user shall complete recurrent training at a minimum of every 3 years and refresher training as needed.~~
-
- ~~Training Records: Each department or project supervisor shall keep a record of authorized users training.~~
-
- ~~Laws: Knowledge of and compliance with applicable state and federal laws, rules, regulations and University policies are the responsibility of the authorized user. Noncompliance may result in the user no longer being allowed to operate an OHV or snowmobile and possibly further disciplinary action and/or remedial training.~~

Supervisors of Authorized Users who operate Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) must maintain accurate records of Authorized Users and the training they have completed. Authorized Users are individually accountable for knowing and complying with all applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and University policies.

2.3 Safety and Operation Requirements

2.3.1 Vehicle Standards

In accordance with Utah Code Section 41-22-10.7, all OHVs operated by Authorized Users must be equipped with:
(1) brakes adequate to stop and hold the vehicle;
(2) headlights and taillights when operated between sunset and sunrise;
(3) noise control devices (mufflers) and spark arrestors (except for snowmobiles); and
(4) safety flags when operated on designated sand dunes.

2.3.2. Reporting Accidents:

~~All a~~Accidents involving an OHV ~~or snowmobile~~ must be reported ~~immediately to the~~ as soon as reasonably possible to the ~~s~~Supervisor of the department to which the equipment is registered., ~~to the Department of Public Safety, USU Environmental Health and Safety, and to USU Risk Management. Reporting form~~ Supervisors must follow all university protocols for accident reporting.

2.3.3 Roll-Over Protective Structure Requirements

Beginning July 1, 2021, all purchased, leased, or rented All-Terrain Type II or III Vehicles must be equipped with a properly installed Roll-Over Protective Structure (ROPS) and seatbelts for all occupants based on Utah Code Section 41-22-10.8. Operators and passengers of Type II and Type III OHVs are required to use available seatbelts at all times.

2.3.4 Vehicle Modifications:
OHVs ~~or snowmobiles~~ may not be modified in any manner that affects the recommended mode of operation, speed, or safety of the vehicle. ~~Seating:~~ All operators and passengers must ~~be in~~ occupy manufacturer-approved seats and adhere to the design~~ed~~ated seating ~~and properly installed for such use~~weight capacity. ~~No p~~Passengers are ~~allowed~~not permitted ~~to be transported~~ on the sides of OHV, ~~with the~~ except~~ion of the~~ when transporting ~~of~~ an injured person secured on a backboard.

~~PPE:~~2.3.5 Personal Protective Equipment
Authorized ~~u~~Users of OHVs~~,~~ classified as All-Terrain Type I Vehicles ~~or snowmobiles shall~~ must wear a DOT-, ANSI-, or SNELL- approved ~~H~~helmet, eye protection, and gloves at all times while operating the vehicle. It is recommended that users also wear over-the-ankle boots, sturdy pants, and long sleeves.

Authorized Users of OHVs classified as All-Terrain Type II and Type III vehicles are required to wear a DOT-, ANSI-, or SNELL-approved helmet, eye protection and gloves when operating in a Backcountry Environment. Use of over-the-ankle boots, sturdy pants, and long sleeves is also recommended in these conditions.

Exemptions from Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements outlined ~~to the~~ in this P~~p~~olicy may be ~~granted~~requested on a case-~~-~~by-~~-~~case basis by the ~~s~~Supervisor overseeing the specific OHV activity. Each request must be submitted for review to EH&S and Risk Management and approved by the Supervisor's Department Head or Director. Exemption durations may not exceed 12 months and must be renewed as needed.

The University does not permit exemptions to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for individuals under the age of 18 operating All-Terrain Type I Vehicles, Snowmobiles, or Motorcycles pursuant to **Error! Reference source not found.**

~~2.2.2 All-terrain type II and III vehicles must have a properly installed and in-place Rollover Protection Structure (ROPS), seat belts for all occupants, and seat belts must be used at all times.~~

2.3.6 Guidelines for Loading and Unloading ~~Vehicle for Transportation~~Activities:
For ~~A~~all loading and unloading activities, ~~should be done by a minimum of two people; a rider and a spotter. Under~~ the following guidelines will be used:

- ~~Avoid riding the vehicle up/down the ramp.~~
- ~~Loading ramp safety strap or chains must be in place on both sides of the ramp.~~
- ~~Loading ramps must be rated for at least 150% of the dry weight of the vehicle.~~
- Loading ramps must be secured on both sides, either by attachment to the trailer or by using safety straps or chains.
- Loading ramps must be rated for at least 150% of the dry weight of the vehicle.
- Avoid placing loading ramps at steep angles (no greater than 30°).

4112.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Authorized Users

Authorized Users are faculty, staff, students, or volunteers who have completed all required training and meet the eligibility criteria below to operate an Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) on behalf of USU. Each Authorized User must:

- hold a valid driver's license legally recognized in the state of Utah and carry it while operating an OHV;
- review this Policy and any exemptions applicable to the Authorized User; and
- complete the following required trainings:

- the Utah OHV certification course required by Utah Code 41-22-31(1)(B);
- an operational safety training or course, specific to the vehicle type;
- any location- or use-specific training assigned by their Supervisor;
- refresher or remedial training as needed or assigned.

While operating an OHV, Authorized Users must:

- wear seatbelts while riding in or operating an All-Terrain Type II or III vehicle made or procured after July 1, 2021;
- wear all required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including a DOT-, ANSI- or SNELL-approved helmet, eye protection, and full-fingered gloves at all times while operating All-Terrain Type I vehicles, or operating Type II or III vehicles in a Backcountry Environment (unless a documented exemption is approved);
- operate the OHV safely and in compliance with all applicable laws and policies;
- promptly report any accidents, safety concerns, or maintenance issues to their Supervisor; and
- avoid unsafe modifications or unauthorized changes to the OHVs operation or configuration.

3.1.1 Use of Substances or Devices

Authorized Users are prohibited from operating an OHV while under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, or prescription medications that may impair their ability to operate a vehicle. Additionally, the use of mobile phones for any purpose while operating an OHV is strictly prohibited.

3.2 Supervisors ~~Responsibilities~~

Supervisors ~~must ensure that each~~ of A~~a~~uthorized U~~u~~sers ~~under their supervision,~~ who operate~~s an OHV motorcycle or snowmobile,~~Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) ~~has received the required training outlined above.~~must ensure the following:

~~2.1.1 Supervisors who oversee the use of an OHV or snowmobile in accordance with this policy shall ensure that any authorized user operating the vehicle possesses a driver's license that is valid in the state of Utah and has received a copy of this policy.~~

~~2.1.2 Each OHV or snowmobile vehicle operator is responsible for providing immediate notification of safety and maintenance concerns to the supervisor to which the OHV or snowmobile is assigned.~~

~~2.1.3 Supervisors who oversee the use of OHVs or snowmobiles will at a minimum, ensure the vehicle is maintained according to manufacture recommendations.~~

~~2.1.4 Supervisors who oversee the operation of any OHV or snowmobiles will provide authorized users access to a DOT, ANSI, or SNELL approved helmet.~~

- Each Authorized User has completed all required training outlined in this Policy, holds a driver's license valid in the state of Utah, possesses any applicable state-required certifications, and has reviewed a copy of this Policy along with any approved exemptions.
- OHVs are maintained according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Users are provided with access to a DOT, ANSI, or SNELL- approved helmet, appropriate eye protection, and gloves.
- Requests for Policy exemptions are submitted appropriately and undergo formal review by both EH&S and Risk Management. No exemption is implemented without this review and final approval from the appropriate Department Head or Director.
- Maintain accurate records of Authorized Users, OHV training completion, and active PPE exemptions.
- Noncompliance is addressed through remedial training, revocation of OHV privileges, or further disciplinary action.

3.3 Environmental Health & Safety

Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) supports the safe operation of Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs) and ensures compliance with applicable University, local, state, and federal laws and regulations. EH&S will:

- review and provide feedback on exemption requests related to PPE requirements, ensuring alignment with this Policy, regulatory standards, and best practices;
- offer guidance to help departments implement compliant and effective OHV safety practices;
- advise on equipment standards, hazard mitigation, training needs, and incident prevention strategies; and
- assist in assessing whether OHVs meet safety and ROPS requirements.

3.4 Risk Management

Risk management supports safe and compliant Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use by advising on risk-related matters and minimizing institutional liability. Risk Management will:

- jointly review exemption requests related to PPE and safety requirements in coordination with EH&S to ensure exemptions do not increase institutional risk; and
- advise on insurance coverage, claims processes, and risk mitigation strategies for University-owned or operated OHVs.

4112.4 REFERENCES

- ~~Utah Code 41-22-2~~Utah Code Title 41, Chapter 22 – Off-highway Vehicles (multiple sections referenced)

4112.5 RELATED USU POLICIES

- Policy 3014: Safety and Health
- Policy 5312: Vehicle Use Policy
- Policy 5315: Use of University Property

4112.6 DEFINITIONS

- **All-Terrain Type I Vehicle.** Any motor vehicle 52 inches or less in width, having a shipping weight of 1,500 pounds or less, traveling on three or more Low-Pressure Tires, having a seat designed to be straddled by the operator, and designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain.

- **All-Terrain Type II Vehicle. [a]** Any motor vehicle 80 inches or less in width, traveling on four or more
-
- Low-Pressure **Tire**s, having a steering wheel, non-straddle seating, rollover protection system, and designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain and is: **(i)** an electric-powered vehicle; or **(ii)** a vehicle powered by an internal combustion engine and has a shipping weight of 3,500 pounds or less. **[b]** All-Terrain Type II vehicles do not include golf carts, any vehicle designed to carry a person with a disability, any vehicle not specifically designed or modified primarily for recreational use on unimproved terrain, or farm tractors, as identified under Utah Code Section 41-1a-102.

- **All-Terrain Type III Vehicle.** Any other motor vehicle not defined as All-Terrain Type I or II that is designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain. All-Terrain Type III vehicles do not include golf carts, any vehicle designed to carry a person with a disability, any vehicle not specifically designed or modified primarily for recreational use on unimproved terrain, or farm tractors, as defined under Utah Code Section 41-1a-102.

- **Authorized User**. ~~means~~ Aany USU faculty, staff, ~~or~~ student, or volunteer ~~that has received~~ who has completed all ~~USU prescribed~~ required training and meets the eligibility criteria to operate an OHV~~, motorcycle, or snowmobile for USU business or research.~~on behalf of the University.

- **Backcountry Environment.** Means a remote, undeveloped, or minimally developed area where emergency services may be delayed or unavailable, terrain is often rugged or unpaved, and communication or navigation infrastructure is limited. This includes trails, open land, forest service roads, rangelands, and other off-highway areas not regularly maintained for standard vehicle use, outside of reliable cell phone service.

- **Low-Pressure Tires**. Any pneumatic tire six inches or more in width designed for use on wheels with a rim diameter of fourteen inches or less and utilizing an operating

  - ~~**Roadway** means that portion of the highway improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular travel.~~

- **Motorcycle** ~~means~~ any motor vehicle having a~~nd~~ straddle-type seat ~~for the use of the operator~~ and is designed to travel on not more than two tires.

- **Off Highway Vehicles (OHV)** ~~means a~~A motor-driven off-road vehicle (excluding watercraft) capable of travel without the benefit of a road or trail, on or over land, snow, ice or other natural terrain. ~~I~~including but not limited to ~~the following types:~~Snowmobiles, Motorcycles, and All-Terrain Type I, II, and III vehicles.

- ~~**All-terrain type I vehicle** means any motor vehicle 52 inches or less in width, having and unladen dry weight of 1,500 pounds or less, traveling on four or more low pressure tires, having a seat designed to be straddled by the operator, and designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain.~~

- ~~**All-terrain type II vehicle** means any other motor vehicle 80 inches or less in width, traveling on four or more low pressure tires, having a steering wheel, non-straddle seating, rollover protection systems designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain and is:~~
  - ~~An electric power vehicle; or~~
  - ~~A vehicle powered by an internal combustion engine and has an unladen dry weight of 2,500 pounds or less.~~

  ~~"All-terrain type II vehicle" does not include golf carts, any vehicle designed to carry a person with a disability, any vehicle not specifically designed for recreational use, farm tractors and implements, or any vehicle primarily intended for highway travel.~~

- ~~**All-terrain type III vehicle** means any other motor vehicle not defined here in designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain.~~

  ~~"All-terrain type III vehicle" does not include golf carts, any vehicle designed to carry a person with a disability, farm tractors and implements, or any vehicle primarily intended for highway travel.~~

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** ~~means~~ Pprotective clothing, helmets, goggles, gloves, boots, or other garments or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection. The hazards addressed by protective equipment include physical, electrical, heat, chemicals, biohazards, and airborne particulate matter.

- **Roll-O~~o~~ver Protective Structure (ROPS)** ~~means a system or structure intended to protect equipment operators and motorists from injuries caused by vehicle overturns or rollovers. Like roll cages and roll bars in cars and trucks, a ROPS involves bars attached to the frame that maintain a space for the operator's body in the event of rollover.~~Refers to a vehicle or piece of equipment that is fitted with a safety feature designed to protect the operator in the event of a rollover. A ROPS typically consists of a reinforced steel frame or bar system that creates a protective zone

around the operator.

Commonly found on tractors, construction equipment, and certain utility vehicles (such as UTVs or ATVs used in work settings). ROPS must be used in conjunction with a seatbelt to be effective. Without a seatbelt, the operator can be thrown from the protective zone during a rollover, reducing the ROPS's ability to prevent injury.

- **Snowmobile** ~~means any motor vehicle~~ A motorized OHV designed for travel on snow or ice, typically steered ~~and supported in whole or in part~~ by skis~~, belts, cleats runners, on low pressure tires.~~at the front and driven by a continuous track at the rear. Snowmobiles are intended for off-road use and not for highway travel.

- **Supervisor** ~~means t~~The person ~~or persons~~ who gives instructions or orders to subordinate~~s~~ employees and/or volunteers and is held responsible for the work and actions of other employees and/or volunteers. ~~Under USU a~~A Ssupervisor is considered ~~anyone~~someone who approves a timecard or leave requests for an employee and/or volunteer. In research settings, a Principal Investigator (PI) may also be considered a Supervisor.

RESOURCES

Related Forms and Tools

- OHV PPE Exemption Request Form

Contacts

- Environmental Health and Safety: Office of Research Environmental Health and Safety | USU
  - Risk Management: Risk Management | USU

POLICY HISTORY

Original issue date: 2021/02/10
Last revision date: ~~2026/01/16~~2026/MM/DD
Next scheduled review date: 2029/10/01
Previous revision dates: 2021/02/10; 2025/10/29; 2026/01/16

University Policy 4112: Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Usage

Category: Academic Affairs

Sub Category: Research

Covered Individuals: University Employees, Students, and Volunteers

Responsible Executive: Vice President for Research

Policy Custodian: Office of Research, Executive Director of Environmental Health & Safety

Last Revised: 2026/01/16

Previous USU Policy Number: 539 & 4110

4112.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy is to establish the safe and continued use of motorized vehicles defined by Utah State University (USU) as Off Highway Vehicle (OHVs) for all USU sponsored activities or research.

This policy applies to all USU faculty, staff, students and visitors who are authorized to use an OHV or snowmobile. This policy has particular relevance to USU farms, horticultural units, and research conducted outside of USU owned or operated property.

4112.2 POLICY

2.1 General Use of OHVs or Snowmobiles

2.1.1 Only Authorized Users may operate an OHV or snowmobile for USU business.

2.1.2 OHVs or Snowmobiles owned by USU may only be operated for official USU business. Motorcycle use is strongly discouraged for USU business.

2.1.3 Authorized Users of OHVs or snowmobiles must have a driver's license that is valid in the state of Utah. The user must have their driver's license with them when operating the vehicle.

2.1.4 Drugs and Alcohol: Authorized users shall not operate an OHV or snowmobile while under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, prescription drugs with potential to impair your ability to operate a motor vehicle, or illegal drugs.

2.1.5 Registration: OHVs or snowmobiles owned or operated by USU must be registered with USU Property Management in accordance with Utah Laws. Experimental vehicles are exempt from registration.

2.1.6 Mobile Phone: No authorized user shall operate an OHV or snowmobile while using a mobile phone for talking or texting.

2.1.7 Purchasing: Beginning July 1, 2021 all purchased, leased or rented All Terrain Type II or Type III vehicles must be equipped with a manufacturer's installed ROPS system including seat belts.

2.2 Training

2.2.1 Initial Training: To become an authorized user, faculty, staff or students must complete one of the following training courses:

- Utah OHV Safety Course offered online from Utah State Parks: https://www.offroad- ed.com/utah/
- Utah Snowmobile Safety Course offered online from Utah State Parks: https://www.snowmobilecourse.com/usa/utah/
- Utah State University OHV Training course offered online from the Environmental Health and Safety Office.

2.2.2 Specialized Training: Each project using OHVs or snowmobiles must conduct training specific for the location, conditions and type of use.

2.2.3 Recurrent Training: Each authorized user shall complete recurrent training at a minimum of every 3 years and refresher training as needed.

2.2.4 Training Records: Each department or project supervisor shall keep a record of authorized users training.

2.2.5 Laws: Knowledge of and compliance with applicable state and federal laws, rules, regulations and University policies are the responsibility of the authorized user. Noncompliance may result in the user no longer being allowed to operate an OHV or snowmobile and possibly further disciplinary action and/or remedial training.

2.3 Safety and Operation Requirements

2.3.1 Accidents: All accidents involving an OHV or snowmobile must be reported immediately to the supervisor of the department to which the equipment is registered, to the Department of Public Safety, USU Environmental Health and Safety, and to USU Risk Management. Reporting form

2.3.2 Modifications: OHV or snowmobiles may not be modified in any manner that affects the recommended mode of operation, speed or safety of the vehicle.

2.3.3 Seating: All passengers must be in seats designed and properly installed for such use. No passengers are allowed to be transported on the sides of OHV with the exception of the transport of an injured person secured on a backboard.

2.3.4 PPE: Authorized users of OHVs, or snowmobiles shall wear a DOT, ANSI, or SNELL approved Helmet at all times while operating the vehicle. Exemptions to the policy may be granted on a case by case basis by the supervisor overseeing the activity.

2.3.5 All-terrain type II and III vehicles must have a properly installed and in-place Rollover Protection Structure (ROPS), seat belts for all occupants, and seat belts must be used at all times.

2.3.6 Loading and Unloading Vehicle for Transportation: All loading and unloading activities should be done by a minimum of two people; a rider and a spotter. Under the following guidelines:

- Avoid riding the vehicle up/down the ramp.
- Loading ramp safety strap or chains must be in place on both sides of the ramp.
- Loading ramps must be rated for at least 150% of the dry weight of the vehicle.

4112.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Supervisor Responsibilities

3.1.1 Supervisors must ensure that each authorized user under their supervision, who operates an OHV motorcycle or snowmobile, has received the required training outlined above.

3.1.2 Supervisors who oversee the use of an OHV or snowmobile in accordance with this policy shall ensure that any authorized user operating the vehicle possesses a driver's license that is valid in the state of Utah and has received a copy of this policy.

3.1.3 Each OHV or snowmobile vehicle operator is responsible for providing immediate notification of safety and maintenance concerns to the supervisor to which the OHV or snowmobile is assigned.

3.1.4 Supervisors who oversee the use of OHVs or snowmobiles will at a minimum, ensure the vehicle is maintained according to manufacture recommendations.

3.1.5 Supervisors who oversee the operation of any OHV or snowmobiles will provide authorized users access to a DOT, ANSI, or SNELL approved helmet.

4112.4 REFERENCES

- Utah Code 41-22-2

4112.5 RELATED USU POLICIES

- Policy 5312: Vehicle Use Policy

4112.6 DEFINITIONS

- **Authorized User** means any faculty, staff or student that has received USU prescribed training to operate an OHV, motorcycle, or snowmobile for USU business or research.
- **Roadway** means that portion of the highway improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular travel.
- **Motorcycle** means any motor vehicle having and saddle for the use of the operator and designed to travel on not more than two tires.
- **Off Highway Vehicles (OHV)** means a motor driven off-road vehicle (excluding watercraft) capable of travel without the benefit of a road or trail, on or over land, snow, ice or other natural terrain. Including but not limited to the following types:
    - **All-terrain type I vehicle** means any motor vehicle 52 inches or less in width, having and unladen dry weight of 1,500 pounds or less, traveling on four or more low pressure tires, having a seat designed to be straddled by the operator, and designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain.
    - **All-terrain type II vehicle** means any other motor vehicle 80 inches or less in width, traveling on four or more low pressure tires, having a steering wheel, non-straddle seating, rollover protection systems designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain and is:
        - An electric-power vehicle; or
        - A vehicle powered by an internal combustion engine and has an unladen

dry weight of 2,500 pounds or less.

"All-terrain type II vehicle" does not include golf carts, any vehicle designed to carry a person with a disability, any vehicle not specifically designed for recreational use, farm tractors and implements, or any vehicle primarily intended for highway travel.

- **All-terrain type III vehicle** means any other motor vehicle not defined here in designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain.

  "All-terrain type III vehicle" does not include golf carts, any vehicle designed to carry a person with a disability, farm tractors and implements, or any vehicle primarily intended for highway travel.

- **Personal Protective Equipment** means protective clothing, helmets, goggles, or other garments or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection. The hazards addressed by protective equipment include physical, electrical, heat, chemicals, biohazards, and airborne particulate matter.

- **Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS)** means a system or structure intended to protect equipment operators and motorists from injuries caused by vehicle overturns or rollovers. Like roll cages and roll bars in cars and trucks, a ROPS involves bars attached to the frame that maintain a space for the operator's body in the event of rollover.

- **Snowmobile** means any motor vehicle designed for travel on snow or ice steered and supported in whole or in part by skis, belts, cleats runners, on low pressure tires.

- **Supervisor** means the person or persons who give instructions or orders to subordinates and is held responsible for the work and actions of other employees. Under USU a supervisor is considered anyone who approves a timecard or leave requests for an employee.

Information below is not included as part of the contents of the official Policy. It is provided only as a convenience for readers/users and may be changed at any time by persons authorized by the President, subject to review by the USU Policy Committee.

RESOURCES

Contacts

- Director of Environmental Health & Safety Office

POLICY HISTORY

Original issue date: 2021/02/10

Last revision date: 2026/01/16

Next scheduled review date: 2029/03/01

Previous revision dates: 2025/10/29